Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park
and the
Gold Discovery Park Association

Oral History Project
2000/2001

Ruth Carr
September 19, 2000

Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park
Gold Discovery Park Association
Oral History Project
Nomination Form

Did you or someone you know live in Coloma? Do you or that person have connections to Coloma's early days? Would that person be a good candidate for an oral history interview to be included in the Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park Library? If so, please complete this form and submit to: Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park, Oral History Project, P.O. Box 265, Coloma, California 95613.

My name is *Melody Moore / Jim Goodspeed*

Address: *1970 Driftwood Circle, El Dorado Hills, CA 95762*

Phone: (home) *(916) 939-7230* (work) _____

Email address *melodyblairmoore @cs.com*

Please complete as much of the nomination form as possible – any information you provide will be very helpful to the Project.

~Subject Personal Profile~

Subject Name *Ruth Carr*

☐ Male ☐ Female

Address *1000B Old Newman Road, Rescue, CA*

Phone *(916) 933-2189*

Email address _____

Date of Birth _*March 24, 1920*_ Birthplace _*Rescue, CA*_

Ethnicity/Religion__ *Methodist*_____ Education _*High School, Placerville*_____

Occupation _*Home Nurse, Cook for the Schools, Homemaker*_____

Affiliations _NDGW, GDPA, *Rebekah, Grange, El Dorado Rose*_____

Married? _*yes*___ To Whom? *Edward L. Carr*_____

When and Where? _*August 22, 1938, Carson City, Nevada*_____

Children? _*2*__ How many? _*Two Sons, raised three neices and nephews*_____

Names of Sisters and brothers _*Charles, Henry, Lucille, Edwin, Myrtle, George, Paul, Ann, Jewel*_____

Date arrived in ~~Coloma~~ _*Rescue*_____ Date left _*Life long resident*_____

Did ancestors live in ~~Coloma~~? Rescue?_yes_ Date arrived _*1852*_____

Earliest date ancestor arrived in California ___*1852*_____

Family names of ancestors in California _*Ebbert, Freidman, Meder, Pritten, Litton*_____

_____

Where did these ancestors live? _*Rescue*_____

_____

Occupation of ancestors *Mining, Ranching, Teamsters, Wagon Train Scout*_____

Affiliations of ancestors *Masons, NSGW, Eastern Star*_____

Why would this person be a good subject of the MGDSHP Oral History Project?

_*[Information provided by Jim Goodspeed] Most people, who have been at the park for long, know Ruth. Ruth is an Ebbitt for whom Ebbett's Pass (S R 4) is named. Ruth was instrumental in getting the freight wagons assessioned to the park. She is a friend of the park and should be interviewed early to develop interview skills and record valuable information. She is familiar with the Jayhawk Cemetery, Pinch Penny Creek and Store and Coloma's pre-park days. She has also been a GDPA member longer than anyone I know. I know Ruth from the GDPA, United Rescue Grange, El Dorado Rose Association (she is a past El Dorado Rose) and El Dorado Historic Society.*

Is there anything else we should know about this person in making a selection for the MGDSHP Oral History Project?_____

_____

_____

Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park
and the
Gold Discovery Park Association
Oral History Project
Interview Agreement

We, Ruth Carr (Narrator) and Melody Moore (Interviewer)
do hereby give to the Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park for research and eductional use the tape-recorded interview(s) recorded on Sept. 19, 2000, transcripts(s), and related photographs(s) as an unrestricted gift and transfer to the Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park legal title and all literary property rights including copyright. This gift does not preclude any use which we may want to make of the information in the recordings ourselves.

Ruth M Carr	Melody Moore
Signature of Narrator	*Signature of Interviewer*
Sept 19, 2000	Sept. 19 2000
Date	*Date*
Ruth. May Carr	MELODY MOORE
Name	*Name*
1000B - old Neumann Rd	1970 DRIFTWOOD CIRCLE
Address	*Address*
Rescue Ca 95672	EL DORADO HILLS CA 95762
916-933-2189	(916) 939-0455
Phone No.	

Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park Oral History Project
Major Topics

Narrator Ruth Carr Interviewer Melody Moore/Jim Goodspeed

Date Sept. 19. 2000

Persons mentioned: AUGUST EBBERT, ANDY EBBERT, FREDERICKA FREEDMAN, FREDALINA FREEDMAN, AUGA WILLIAM EBBERT, WILLIAM EBBERT, MEDER. PRITTEN, GRACE PRITTEN, CLARENCE PRITTEN, LOUIS PRITTEN, CHARLES EBBERT, HENRY EBBERT, LUCILLE EBBERT, EDWIN EBBERT, EDWIN EBBERT, GEORGE EBBERT, MYRTLE EBBERT, PAUL EBBERT, ANN EBBERT, JEWEL EBBERT, STELLA LITTON, JULIA MACDONALD, "OLD MAN" MONROE, MRS. NELSON; LOU VEELY, JOHN CANARY, GRANNIE MACKIE, LILLIAN DIXON

Places (buildings, towns,etc.) RESCUE, CALIFORNIA; IVY HOTEL, PLACERVILLE, CA; FIDDLETOWN, CA; RED AND WHITE STORE, PLACERVILLE CA; COLOMA, CA; MCCLELLAN FIELD, NATOMAS; FOREST HILL, CA; DEADWOOD, CA; SILVER JACK MINE, RESCUE CA; THOMAS HOUSE, COLOMA, CA; PAPINNI HOUSE, COLOMA, CA;

Events: COLOMA PLAY DAYS, CHRISTMAS.

Other key topics: HOUSEHOLD CHORES, RATTLESNAKES, FARMING, ~~CHRISTMAS~~, ROADS, PEDDLERS, COURTSHIP, ROLLERSKATING, GOLD DREDGING, GOLD MINING - HARD ROCK, GOLD NUGGETS, EL DORADO ROSE; FREIGHT WAGONS, COLOMA; WAGON TRAIN SCOUTS, HORSE THIEF,

PEOPLE : MABEL CARR, FRANCIS CARPENTER, ILA BRAZIL

PLACES! EBBETTS PASS, PINCH 'EM TIGHT STORE, JAYHAWK CEMETERY,

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This recording was made in the afternoon of September 19, 2000 at the library in the museum of Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park in Coloma, California.

MM: I'm Melody Moore and I'm here today with Ruth Carr, who's going to tell us a bit about her life. Umh, Ruth can you just start at the beginning, tell us a little bit about yourself and your family.

RC: Well, I was born over here in Rescue; it's about nine miles from here. My father and my family had a place over there. My grandfather, my great grandfather they all crossed the plains and settled in Rescue. In about, I think they arrived, in about 1952 [1852]. They started a year or two before that; they took a little while. And then when they got over here, his father and they had one place. Then later my Dad and his brother got a place there in Rescue where he settled and five of those children were born in that house.

MM: Can you tell us some of those names; your father's name your mother's and kids...

RC: My father's name was August Ebbert and his brother was Andy Ebbert. And his mother was Freidman and her name was Fredericka and her mother's name was Fredalina.

MM: That's unusual.

RC: Yeah, she was married to my grandfather. Let's see...his brother was Auga William. I was trying to think, He was uh, my grandfather's name was William and my grandmother of course was Fredalina or Fredericka.

MM: And they came across the plains?

RC: Yes, they came across the plains and they arrived in Rescue about 1852.

MM: Where'd they start from?

RC: Um, Missouri, where the wagon trains all gathered. They were uh, they came from back on the coast, they were someplace that they arrived from Germany and then they got to Missouri and formed the wagon train. And there was uh, Freidmans and Meders and Ebberts and all their families, so there was quite a big train of them. It was, uh, they all came over together.

MM: That was your father's people.

RC: Mmhmm, that was my father's people. My mother's people came across years ago,

but I'm not sure of the years and they were up in Burney. And they settled up in Burney, and my grandmother and grandfather Pritten. She married a Pritten, P-R-I-T-T-E-N. And uh, they had uh, two children and when Grandmother was pregnant with her third child, my grandfather fell off of the barn roof, he was shingling, and was killed.

MM: Aaaahhh.

RC: So Grandmother had to raise her children all by herself and she did it by cooking.

And she cooked up here in Placerville, in Ivy Hotel for a while and she cooked for road camps, road crews, and different types of things where she could keep her children with her. 'Cause at that time, even in a kitchen in a restaurant, you could keep your children with you. They wouldn't allow that now.

MM: That was your mother's mother, she was widowed and she raised three children...

RC: Yeah my mother's mother. My mother was Grace Pritten, Grace May Pritten and she uh, had two brothers. She had Clarence Pritten and she had Louis Pritten. Louis was born after his father died.

MM: Do you know when she would have been cooking in the Ivy Hotel?

RC: I don't know the exact years it was, because when I talked to her she couldn't remember the exact years. My mother was born in 1899 and she was just a small child, so it was early in the 1900's sometime. And she was quite a woman; she really was a hard worker. But she raised those kids and they all turned out good. And they're all gone now, of course. One of my uncles was the last one to go. My mother was the first one, she was one of the younger, but she died at the age of 60. She wasn't, uh she had cancer. Of course, they didn't know it till too late at that time. But uh, she raised ten children, I was the third one of ten. There was seven brothers and sisters younger than I am. I had three brothers older, Charles and Henry were older than I was. And then there was, uh, Charles and Henry and then there was me, and then there was my sister Lucille, and Edwin. Now they were all born in Rescue. And then uh, after that, they

moved to Lodi and around to different places. He was following work. And they had five more.

MM: Oh!

RC: And they ended up in Fiddletown and the last three were born up in Fiddletown. Uh, the after, uh let's see, there was Edwin then there was George and Myrtle, and Paul, Ann, and Jewel.

MM: Edwin, George...

RC: Edwin and George, then Myrtle, then Paul, then Ann and then Jewel. So they had, uh, my mother kept busy! (laughing) We had uh, didn't have any electricity, as long as I was..., not until after I was married and gone before they finally got into a place that had any electricity. So, she did all her washing the old-fashioned way, and she had a board, and a rub board, and she had a washing machine that had something on the top and you manually pushed it around this way and sloshed the clothes through the water.

MM: Now, I wish we had a video camera; you were describing how she would move the thing, a handle on the top of the washtub.

RC: Well, yeah, there was a handle on the top of the wash tub, yeah it went back and forth like that, and that swished the clothes around in there. Everybody had to take their turn on that and believe me. And then what didn't come clean, you had to take them out of there and you rinsed them and then if they weren't clean, then they went into the tub with the wash board. And they were scrubbed the rest of it, uh, they were scrubbed by hand and with the scrub brushes and different things.

MM: How did they heat the water?

RC: In boilers on wood stoves. I don't know why, boilers, do you know what a boiler was? It was a big oval, it was, oh maybe, well it covered the whole front of the stove over two holes and it was oh, maybe a foot or a little over, tall. And you'd fill that up with water and put it on the stove and heated it, heated the water in the old boilers. Some of them were copper, and some of them were kind of a tin metal of some kind, I don't know. I don't remember, they were silver-colored, but I can't remember what they were.

MM: Tell us more about some of the chores around the house, that was really interesting.

RC: Chores around the house, course we had wood floors and we had to scrub them. And you'd use your brooms to sweep until they got kind of ragged. Then you'd cut them off square again, cause they'd usually get lopsided, and then you'd use those to scrub the old wood floors. You'd put down lye water, and you didn't go barefooted then. (laughing) You'd use your boots, rubber boots, and then you'd put that, scrub it with the lye water to get them good and white. Yeah, and then after that, why you'd put clear water on and swept all the water out the door. And uh, then you took the mop and she'd mopped up anything else, water that was left. And then you had your really clean floors. The lye would take the, any cooking, grease spatters out of the old wood. It was uh, we had an old wood stove. It was a Home Comfort. And it had a water well on the back, so there was enough water in that to wash your...for dish washing. Then there was usually a teakettle or two to rinse them and you did all your washing in dishpans. You'd

wash them in one and set them in another and then take the tea kettle off that was boiling and pour that over all the clean dishes to sterilize them good and then you'd, course you had to dry them, you always had to dry them, never heard of air dry at that time. So, we'd dry them and put them away then.

MM: What were you eating? What kind of food and where did you get it?

RC: Oh, my Dad would butcher, we had cattle, we had hogs, we had sheep. We had a lot of more sheep. He made most of his money on sheep. The wool and also the meat. He kept the Red and White Store in Placerville supplied in lamb. And so every week he'd take down so many lambs, whatever they needed. And uh, that pretty well kept us in our basic supplies. Course we baked our own bread. We had a lot of beans and we had lots of dried peas. We had a lot of pea soup. And uh, mother canned. She had big gardens, and she canned, green beans and corn and peas if we had them enough. Seem like we ate most of them when they were fresh. And then, uh tomatoes, we canned lots of tomatoes, she even canned squash. And then of course, we had winter squash that you could keep most of the winter. And we had lots of apples. We had about 17 apple trees. And uh, we had big bins of apples down in the cellar. But uh, that was kind of a rattlesnakey place, so you really didn't like to go down there after dark. You wanted to go when you could see where you were going.

MM: In the cellar, there were rattlesnakes?

RC: Oh, they loved that in the summertime, they'd go down where it was cool, so you'd have to really watch for the snakes at that time. And I'll have to tell you about my Dad, he was a very, very modest man. I don't think we ever saw even

his bare ankles when we were kids. But he and my brothers and I, I was on top of the...we were getting the hay in.

I was on top stamping it down, 'cause it was loose hay, it wasn't bales. My two brothers and my Dad would pick up with their pitchforks, pick up the whole shock of hay and up it and on to the top the truck and I'd move it around and stomp it down to pack it. Well, this one day, up they went and here was a rattlesnake coming right down the handle of his pitchfork, and he wore the loose bib overalls and it went right down his overalls. And believe me, whether he was modest or not, he shucked those overalls so fast that you couldn't believe it and the last thing I saw was him running as hard as he could run for the house in his BVDs. (laughing)

MM: He didn't get bit?

RC: He didn't get bit. It was all pretty fast. I guess the snakes have to kind of coil to bite or something. And here he just went right down and he shucked those overalls so fast. You could see him coming down the pitch fork handle, and I tell you before he could let go of it, it was down in his bibbed pants and he was gone. And my brothers killed the snake.

MM: That's a great story.

RC: Well, he was very, very embarrassed, for him because my sister and my mother. My mother wasn't, well I had a sister younger than I was, and they all saw his legs, and for as modest a man as he was, that was the worst part of it all. Was everybody seeing his bare legs and his BVDs.

MM: So, all these household chores, the farm work and the stuff in house. How much of it did you participate in?

RC: Well, being the oldest girl, I did a good part of the cooking. And my mother never liked to cook, and my grandmother would be around quite a bit and so she taught me to cook. And uh, so nearly all the cooking was left to me excepting for breakfast, my Dad cooked breakfast. The other meals, why my mother would always say, well let's do this and that, but I did most of the cooking. And of course, dishwashing, we all had to do that. Sundays my brothers had to wash the dishes. But the rest of the time the girls did it. But that was one day the boys had to wash the dishes. My father was very religious and we went to church whenever we was anywhere near one. And if we weren't, we used to listen to Seth Parker program which was a religious program every Sunday and that was something we had to sit there and listen to, because that was part of Sunday. If we couldn't go to church, we heard Seth Parker. And uh, it was a good program. And there was uh, they sent away and got the hymn that they sung and everybody would sing right along with uh, their choir and everything and we had a regular church program in our home. And then afterward my Dad would lead the prayers and everything. My Dad was an ordained minister and so was my mother, but she was never much of a...she couldn't get up in front of a crowd. But she did go through the seminar and get through it all. But she...

MM: What faith was that?

RC: Well, that was the Church of the Golden Rule; it was called at that time. Uh, but we was raised in the Methodist Church originally, and then later years, they

went, they joined the Church of the Golden Rule and that's where they both became, went through their ministry. When I left Rescue, married my husband and left, and that left my rest of the family there and uh, Mom said, and she had to do the cooking. (laughing)

MM: What about games and Christmases and things like that, you know.

RC: Well, we always had a big Christmas tree, and we had a lot of Christmas decorations that had been handed down in the family. Some of them from Germany, and some of them that, an awful lot of them, we made and hung on the tree. But my Dad's family had some real beautiful Christmas ornaments that were from Germany that we always hung on the tree. And course there was no lights, and he wouldn't allow candles 'cause it was too dangerous. So, uh, we just had the decorated tree. And Christmas morning it was bedlam, with all those kids out to see what Santa hauls up and we never put anything under the tree before hand. It was bare, when we went to bed on Christmas Eve, and then Christmas morning all those gifts were there. There was no, fantasy about, well Santa Claus brought it early, or this or that. It was all Santa Claus brought.

MM: Do you remember a favorite present?

RC: Well, we never got more than one thing, and uh, I remember I wanted roller skates and I didn't get them. (laughing) And then somebody gave me a second hand pair. I had a doll that I called Lily, and it was a porcelain-headed doll. I still have that doll, but my sister got mad at me and banged her head and broke it. But, we got a new head. Next Christmas, that was all I got for Christmas was a doll head, and we put my doll back together again. Yeah, but the younger ones,

my older brothers had gone to work, so they had more things and better Christmases for the little kids, maybe spoiled them more, I don't know. But that one doll, I can remember Lily. (laughing)

MM: Where did you go to school, and can you talk about your schooling a little bit?

RC: I went to school at the Rescue one-room schoolhouse. And at that time, my father's cousin, Stella Litton, was the teacher. I think that one first year we went over there they brought all my brothers and sisters, even if they were only three and four years old for a week to get the school open, because there wasn't enough students to open the school. So, we had the youngest ones there, Lucille and Edwin, and they weren't old enough really to go to school yet. But they came and they opened the school and then pretty soon a family moved in, so they sent the little kids back home to Mother. We were living in Fiddletown, but I was staying with my father's cousins, Stella Litton, was a teacher, and Julia MacDonald who lived there. They had a huge, big home down there in Rescue, the biggest house in Rescue, it was at the time. It's burned now, but it was a beautiful home. And they came from Canada. And to build that home they brought down from Canada the beams, he had open beams through that house. And they brought those beams down, had 'em shipped down from Canada to get long enough and heavy enough beams for that house. And it had a bathroom. One bathroom, of course, upstairs. And to warm it, in the dining room, they had a wood stove, and they had a chimney that went up like this and then over like this and then it went up.

MM: It went straight up and then it made a right angle, and then it went up again.

RC: They had a vent over that chimney over on the curve on the flat part under the vent and the vent into the bathroom was over top of that and that warmed up the bathroom. It was the only heat that was upstairs. It was, but it did warm it up if you kept the bathroom door closed. But, of course, I was kind of a naughty little girl and sometimes I'd think they were talking about me, so I'd sneak in the bathroom and listen through that vent to see what they were saying. (laughing) But, they were very political and mostly it was politics, so I'd sneak back again so they wouldn't know I was in there.

MM: When did you first know about Coloma? Did you visit here? And...

RC: When I went to the Rescue school here, they would have what they would call play days. And all the schools, the Rescue school, Union school...there was about five or six different schools, and they'd all come together for a play day. And they'd have all kind of games. That was the only time we ever had enough for a baseball game. You know the whole two teams. Otherwise, we'd just have to play work up and they just maybe three of them would be big enough to play. One would be the pitcher and one would be the catcher and then you'd switch around.

MM: And you'd play right out here?

RC: Out here in the flat, yeah. That was just fantastic for all these schools to get together and play out there. They'd come, somebody with a big truck would usually come to the school, load all the kids up in the back of the truck, sometimes just a flat bed and they could sit down. But, sometimes if they had the

rails around them you could stand up in the back. They didn't worry about... of course, they didn't go very fast either. (laughing) It was all dirt roads then. So, we met quite a few people down here.

MM: Was it basically the same road that you would come now from Rescue through Lotus to Coloma?

RC: Yeah, there's a few corners taken off, and everything but it was about the same, excepting it was dirt and ruts, a very bad road. The big old truck would lumber along there; course every time you'd hit a bump they'd all scream. We had a ball. Nobody wanted to sit in the front with the driver. Everybody wanted to be in back.

MM: Well, wasn't Green Valley Road the main highway at that time?

RC: Uh, the Green Valley Road, yes I have a...when they were going to build the Green Valley or redo it, I'm never sure which, they had to take up a bunch of petitions, I guess to get it paved. And my Dad and Mrs. MacDonald, they took up that petition to get that road improved, I guess that's what it was. And someplace, I still got that petition for those roads; it was in my Dad's stuff. When he died...the original petition. I guess, I don't know, I guess they just took the petition in and I don't know what they did with them, but somehow he got it back.

MM: Um, but that was the main highway that went over to Tahoe, wasn't it?

RC: Yeah, yeah, went to Sacramento and that was the main road and it was dirt. And then we lived on a, uh well, I guess now it's North Shingle Road. I don't know whether they had a name for it then. Maybe just Shingle, cause it went to Shingle Springs and we had our house on that and I can remember the peddlers.

We had more peddlers. There'd be the Watkins man, and the Raleigh man and the tin man. The tin man had all kinds of... the first time he came around he had a horse and he had all these pots, pans and everything. Some of them were in sacks and some of them were just hanging loose and they were rattling, and the women would course, maybe for fifteen cents they could get a new pot for the stove. And he always had some little thing to give to the kids. Then there was, course, the vegetable man. And that was old man Monroe and he lived here in Coloma.

MM: Which Monroe was that, do you know?

RC: I don't know, we called him Old Man Monroe.

MM: One of the black family?

RC: Yes, he was an old man and he had old peddlers wagon. Lot of their vegetables they raised here and some of them they must of brought in up from in Sacramento. Because he had oranges and I know they didn't grow any here. But he had apples, he had a lot of apples and they must, I think they grew them here. And he had, he always had, he always gave something, maybe it was a carrot and maybe it was a radish, but he always had something for every kid. (laughing) If you did something for the kids, I guess the parents would be more apt to buy. So they had... I remember, I can remember Mr. Monroe, Old Man Monroe, that's all we ever knew him by. He was such a nice man and my mother just adored having him come around cause there was always so many nice things. And maybe it'd only cost three or four cents. And she didn't have much money, but I don't know maybe he gave them to her a little cheaper, or something because it

was such a big family. But he always treated her real good. Course she had a big garden so a lot of things she wouldn't have. But he had certain things that we didn't have and...There was all kinds of peddlers of different kinds and would come to the door. But those were mainly Watkins, Raleigh, McNess, those were all spices, spice fellows. And then the vegetable man and the tin man. Now those are the ones that stick out in my mind. The tin man especially because he made such a clatter. (laughing)

MM: That was something to see.

RC: Then he switched over to uh, some kind of a pickup later and he had it all racks and everything filled. Mr. Monroe had an old pickup, I guess it was a Model A or a Model T, because it rattled and it banged a lot. And he had all his bins and everything in there; he had it neat, real neat and everything.

MM: Well, shall we move on to your meeting your husband a little bit later in your life?

RC: Well, that was quite a deal too. I was working – I went to work. I wanted to train for a nurse but my mother took ill and I had to come home so I did a lot of home nursing around helping people and I was taking care of Mrs. Nelson, she had a very severe kidney ailment and she couldn't do anything, so I was working there. And this was, we were, uh, Merryman's, you know where Merrymans is you know where the skating rink is, well that was Merryman's Plaza in there, sort of. And I was working there taking care of Mrs. Nelson in one of the cabins. But whenever her husband came home and was home nights, then I would take off and go skating so they could be alone because he wasn't home very much, he

was working all the time. So I went down to the skating rink and I'd skate. It never cost me anything to get in because there was so many of these boys from the CCC camp there and they liked to skate with girls.

MM: What year was this?

RC: Oh maybe '37, I think right around there. And anyway, I was skating a trio – two boys on each side – and then they'd push you forward and then the next two boys

would catch you and you kept going around the ring like that. Well, this time, the trio in front of us, something happened, and they stumbled and fell. We were too close and we stumbled and fell right on top of them and my husband came in and he was skating single because he didn't know anybody there and he tried to jump over all of us and he hit me on the head and knocked me out. That was my first contact with my husband. (laughing)

He was scared, he came in with my brother, my brother brought him in. My brother was working with him on what was carpentry work on the Green Line Store. That's gone now. They were building that, and he said, "I want you to meet my sister." So, that's why they were there that night. But uh, he really, I really had a bump on the top of my head. And of course, after that, he felt so bad that he had to keep coming back. I guess that's why he kept coming back. Well then, we were married in August of '38. I went with him for about a year I guess. Then while I was, this is funny too, while I was working there for Mrs. Nelson, when I'd go skating there was a little Spanish guy, from Spain. Well, he would talk to me, but I didn't know what he was saying and I was trying to be polite, sure, yeah,

you know. I don't know what I told him I'd do. But anyway, I went home that night, or went back to the Nelson's where I was working, and, uh, he wanted to come in, he was going to come in with me. I said, "You can't! No!" And he poked his head in the door and he yelled "but I luff you" [with Spanish accent] "but I luff you." And I guess I pushed his head out and I slammed that door I was never so embarrassed in all my life. I don't know what I agreed to. But, it seemed pretty obvious, when he... I never got over that as long as I worked for Mr. Nelson. Every time someone knocked at the door he would say, "but I luff you" (laughing). We'd then...I'd work for several other people, taking care of them until they died, usually, or got so bad they took them to the hospital. They took Mrs. Nelson into the hospital and she died shortly after that. And I took care of a Mrs. Frost who uh, her son had a garage up in Placerville, and I took care of her, but she was sort of mentally...you had to watch her all the time, it was really...that bothered me a lot. I was young, I was only 18 maybe, 17, 18 and to be with somebody that wasn't quite all there, that's kind of hard on a young girl. But I did, I took care of her until finally she took so bad that they had to take her and put her in a place where they could watch her. And by that time, Ed said, "Well, we're going to get married." I said, "We are?" and he said, "Yes, we are." So, we did, we went to Reno and got married. I went home and I told my Dad that I was engaged to Ed and I wanted to be married. And he said, "No, the law will take you apart, so you better let the law put you together." He says, "He smokes cigarettes, so he won't be any... he's no good." So, we went to Reno and got married. And the odd part was, my Dad and my mother separated, but Ed and I

stayed together until he died. Yeah, he died in '88. He had uh, he was sick for about ten years before he died. And uh, I took care of him until he did die.

MM: What did he do for a living?

RC: He worked at McClellan Field and he was an engineer out there. And the whole time, well he worked for a short period of time in the woods when he got laid off one time. He worked as a, um, not a tree faller, where they lop the limbs off from the trees that fell. I forget what they call them, and stack the brush. And then he got called back and he went back to McClellan. That happened a lot. They would lay them off, and then they could start them at a lower wage again. And then he'd go back. And when he went back the last time, he was there long enough so he was a foreman of a good-sized group and he was pretty good by then. Yeah, it wasn't an easy life. I had five major surgeries during my married life and then I had two boys that I raised, that I, and then I had several miscarriages, but I raised two boys when doctor told me I'd never be able to, but I did it.

MM: Are they still around?

RC: One of them lives in Washington and one of lives next, uh behind me, where I'm living now. And they each had three children. Um, Roy and Linda are still in Washington and their children. And their grandchildren. So, I'm a great-grandmother six times over and almost seven.

MM: Was your husband from this area? Or did he come to California from someplace else?

RC: He was born in California, he was from Trinity County. And he was following the woods jobs at that time and he came down to work in the woods down here. Whatever it was, they were having problems with uh the redwoods up there. You can't cut the redwoods, you can't do this. So he came down to Placerville and was working in the firs and then he applied at McClellan Field and he got a job there and then when he got laid up there, he'd go back to the woods. And for a while, he worked on one of those dredgers out Natomas area, when they had the big gold dredgers out there. And then he went back to the Field again, it was just between times. They'd have to lay them off for a few weeks in order to knock their wages back down.

MM: They were dredging gold in Natomas like after the war, after World War II?

RC: Yeah, oh about '46 or '47, I think about that time is when they dismantled the dredgers. There was seven of them in that area, big dredgers. And there was two different companies. There was a Natomas Company and the Capitol Hill Company, I think it was called, or Capitol maybe. Yeah, there was seven large dredgers in there. And then of course, the people started getting up in arms about them ruining all the country and leaving just rock piles. So then, they had to smooth out the rock piles and haul in loam to put back in on top. A lot of...

MM: Were you aware of any other mining activity during your whole life in this area?

RC: My Dad was a gold miner, rock. He had uh, he was a hard rock miner. And he had uh, he had several mines. He'd make a little money off of one, and then he would put all in another one and he'd lose it all. He had a hard rock mine up

above Deadwood, Forest Hill, Deadwood and back up in the mountains there. And it was a pretty rich mine it just cost too much for equipment to haul it way back in there and use it. So, he kind of let that lapse. And then he had a dredge mine, there was a gold dredger, up above Camino, and he could work during the winters when there was lots of water, but he couldn't work during the summer because they had to save the water for the city of Placerville. And he was working just below the dam, up above Camino, that came down to Placerville for their water. So he uh, he got some beautiful, he got nuggets at $18 an ounce, he got one that was $1800 and one was $1200, now they were about so big around. [gesturing, a shape about as big around as a baseball]

MM: You're talking about like the size of a tennis ball or something?

RC: Well, they weren't round, none of them were... flat, they were flat. Maybe they would be this thick on one end and then go down to nothing.

MM: Maybe as much as half an inch, you think?

RC: Yeah, and some of them might be a little more, on one edge, and then they'd go down on one end, they were just practically nothing, and they'd just go down real thin. But, they had a lot of big nuggets come out of that. And they were hydraulicking through clay. And it was, then they had, yards and yards of sluice boxes. And you had to have people all along those sluice boxes stirring it to get those clay balls dissolved. Because they'd run down a box and pick up all the small gold. But there was a lot of gold up there.

Finally, they made him quit there, they wouldn't let him go on because there was a gold dredge about polluting the rivers after that, so they had to quit that. So

there's still a lot of gold probably up in that area. But nobody can mine it, least not that way. Now he really made good on that. There was five partners in there and his cousins, Miss Litton and Mrs. MacDonald and Lou Veely and uh, John Canary. He come from one of the Scandinavian countries and he backed them. He put up the money for it. He was rich. And he backed the whole company. And they paid him back and they all made good money. And then my Dad, socked it all into another mine that went broke. Then there was a mine here in Rescue, was called the Sailor Jack. He worked that mine and they made a living, but that's about it.

MM: I'm going to stop so I can turn the tape over.

RC: ...on uh, just up from Rescue. Maybe about a mile from the Rescue store, on the right side of the road, now I don't know of anything there now looks like there's houses in there now.

MM: Just to make sure we got it on the tape, we're talking about the Silver Jack Mine.

RC: Yeah, yeah.

JG: Is that Deer Valley Road? Towards your house on Deer Valley Road from the Rescue Store?

RC: Is that Green Valley? That's Green Valley, isn't it?

JG: Deer Valley, is the road that goes to where you live.

RC: Yeah.

JG: Is that the road we're talking about?

RC: No, it's Green Valley, the one goes right in front of the store.

JG: Okay, so it's west of Rescue Store on Green Valley.

RC: Just about a mile, it was, about a mile west and on the right hand side. But I don't know what's there now, but I do notice there's a couple houses in there. So, I don't know whether the mine is still there, whether they closed it up or what they did with it. It would be interesting to find out. But they, I guess they made pretty good on that. Course it all went. My Dad never did save very much, he'd always put his money back into another mine and we'd end up with practically nothing and I remember we had a grocery bill of $700 one time. And that was a tremendous grocery bill in those days. But uh, with, when you had ten kids, why they'd feel real sorry for you and they'd let you have more credit. And my Dad was so religious and everything and they thought, well he'd be an honest man. I don't know if he ever paid it, I didn't ever ask.

MM: You were talking while we were changing the tape, about Granny Mackie.

RC: He was. Yeah.

JG: Yeah, she was a lady that lived here in Coloma for a lot of years, from oh, about the 1940's on.

RC: She lived to be 111.

MM: And you knew her.

RC: Oh yes, real well. She was really a character. But she died when she was 111, which was how many, about two, three years ago.

MM: How did you know her?

RC: Through um, volunteering here at the park, that's when I met her here. And through Native Daughters, too, and uh... Then she ran for El Dorado Rose one

year. And I was an El Dorado Rose. I don't know if you know the, what a rose was, what a rose is.

MM: I know a little bit about it, but why don't you tell me.

RC: Well, to be an El Dorado Rose, you have to be past 60 years old and you have to be in the County at least ten years and you have to do a lot of volunteer work, or something to show that you have done something for other people. Course the more volunteering you've done, the more apt you are to get the nomination for Rose. So, Mackie was 100 years old when she ran for Rose. She said, "I really don't want to get it, but I sure want to run. I think it's so much fun. But she says, "I don't think I could keep up with everything they have to do." But I'll bet she could have. But she didn't get it that year because she told the judges she really didn't want to win, but she wanted to run. Then she got her costume. You have wear 1885 costumes. And of course, your costumes are part of winning for the El Dorado Rose, too. And you have, but mostly it's your volunteer work at different places. I loved it. I won in 1991. And uh, it's was so much fun. Every time there is a store opening, or anything going on in the county, they ask you to come and talk a little bit or tell them what the Roses are all about. Or something about the Roses or to cut the ribbons. We had a mayor, I forget, uh, think his name was Jackson. But, uh, the mayor, and he had, uh, one eye. So, he had a black patch over his eye. Well, he and I went around quite a few places, cutting ribbons, and, uh, different things for the county. So, I got to know him fairly well, but not his personal life. But I got a lot of pictures taken with that eye with a black patch. (laughing) And he would dress up in an old-fashioned

costume. Course I had my old fashioned clothes. I had to always wear those wherever we did anything. And I was down here [Coloma] a lot. Course we wore those, the old clothes, when we were showing the Thomas house, too. And I, uh, for years, I worked over here, and Lillian Dixon and I would open every Sunday, would open the Thomas house, show it to anyone who came by, and give them tours through it.

MM: Why don't you tell us a little bit about how you became involved with the park as a volunteer? When that was and maybe a little bit of history about the park itself.

RC: Well, when I first got uh, involved with the park, Ed had just died. I'd been here before, but I hadn't really worked. I'd spent a few days doing things here and there, but not on a regular basis. But when Ed died, I was just devastated, you might say. And Lillian Dixon come by, and she said, "You need something to do." She said, "I'm going to pick you up Sunday morning and we're going to go over to the park and show the Thomas house. I guess, I was down deep enough so that I didn't care what I did. And so she brought me over here and I got involved in the Thomas house and I showed the little house, what's the name?

MM: Papini?

RC: Papini house, sometimes on Saturday and sometimes on Sundays, when they closed, they closed the Thomas house for a while to put new underpinnings under it. For two years, I guess. And then I was at the Papini house and at the Monroe house and I went around and I was in the, in here, in the museum part time. Then they opened the Thomas house again and I went back there.

Because when I was young, we used to come down here to the park for play day and somebody would always say, "Run up there and see if you can get the lady that plays the piano." Mrs. Thomas loved children; she never had any of her own. But she would come for anything and play the piano for groups. And so uh, when the children would gather, all these different schools, they'd want to sing songs and if there wasn't a piano, a good piano player, and some of the teachers could play, a little, but they didn't want to show off with that many people so they wouldn't play. So, they'd run up and get Mrs. Thomas, the lady, for years all I knew her by, was 'the lady that played the piano.' But uh, then she would come down and I got to know her pretty well. And when they asked me if I'd like to show the Thomas house, because I had known her, it was real uh, it made me feel good. And then I started working up there. Her husband, Fred, lived for about seven years after she died. And uh, that house was a mess when he got through and we had to, everybody cleaned it. And the ceilings had smoke all over them, black and they had all to be cleaned and washed and everything. But they finally got it in order, and then we started showing it and it was real interesting. And the people that come by, I've had them from all over the world. Some of them I couldn't understand, and some of them I could. And they'd ask me questions, I'd tell them that as much as I could. Some of them I don't know if they understood much of what I told them or not, but it was really interesting. Most of them, the people that come and visit know a little English, even if they're not very good, they know a little and they can understand it even if they can't speak it very well. So we got a long pretty well, with a lot of hand signals, and the dates, mostly

dates are the same in any language, like 1885, well everybody seemed to know when that was. So, it worked out all right and I loved working there.

MM: What's key about 1885?

RC: Well uh, that year that they decided when they opened this park to kind of get everything coordinated with that year. That was an interesting year at the park and a lot of things were going on then, so they picked that date through the park here. They would try to coordinate the Papini house and the Thomas house and the Monroe and everything to about that time. So, that's when they did, and so that's when they wanted our costumes to be, about that time. So that's when the El Dorado Rose decided that'd be a time, a good time for our costumes, also. So we did.

JG: Ruth, can you share with us about when it was they cleaned up the Thomas house and brought it into public view as a house visited here in the park.

RC: Well, uh, they must have done that about 1980. They were cleaning it about 1980.

Soon as Mrs. Thomas died in 1875 [1975], and her husband lived for seven years so it was 1884, no '94.

MM: 1984?

RC: Yeah, '84. And so when he died, the uh, everything went to his sister who was in her 80's. And she said, "I don't want it," and they were just uh, well, you can figure out, well, they were just organizing the park at that time. And so she was interested in that, this sister, and she says, "I'll turn the Thomas house over to the park, as is, everything in it, as a old house." And she says, "And I'll give it

to them." So that's what she did, she just turned the house completely over to them and they started in getting it in order, little at a time right after Fred died. So, it took, it took about five years, I think, to get everything cleaned up and get the park with enough money to clean. Yeah, it had to be about that time.

JG: So, it's early 1980's, about.

RC: Yeah.

MM: Were there many volunteers working for the park at that time?

RC: Yes, I think at that time there was more than there is now and they were more interested. They were organizing and when you're organizing, you get people really interested and then afterwards, it's old stuff, I guess, and they don't, but they're still a lot of them that like to come around and help. I came until I couldn't walk anymore and I couldn't take tours through there. I did for a while when I was on, when I was with a cane. But then I got so it was too hard. I could take one tour. But then for a while, I sat in a chair and gave the spiel and there was another lady that would take them on through.

JG: Who was that Ruth?

RC: I don't remember her name, uh, she was uh, there was two of them.

JG: I know you and Lillian used to work together.

RC: Oh yeah, but that was after Lillian died, and I was still working there. I can't remember what her name is. There was two women, and we called them, not nice, we called them Tweedle-Dee and Tweedle-Dum, they looked so much alike and they were both short and round (laughing) that wasn't nice, that shouldn't be

in there. They would come and they would take people through and I'd give them the spiel.

MM: Incidentally, the voice you're hearing, the man's voice you're hearing on this tape is Jim Goodspeed, who has been sitting with us as we do this.

JG: One thing, Ruth, that would be of interest I think, for the record, on the tape here, would be, you have some background on the freight wagons that are accessioned to the park. Can you tell us how your family came to be involved in that and what happened?

RC: Well, it wasn't, they didn't actually directly my family, but it was my brother-in-law. His mother was Mabel Carr and she donated the wagons, who her grandfather used to drive, freight wagons, from up by Murphy's, no, not Murphy's the other direction. He drove those freight wagons for years. And delivered things in all different places. And uh...

JG: Did he deliver over the Ebbett's Pass alignment or a different alignment?

RC: No, no this way, Ebbett's Pass is the other direction.

JG: Yes that's down where Highway 4 crosses the Sierras.

RC: My father's name was August Ebbert but a lot of people with a foreign tongue couldn't get the *r*'s in there and they called him Mr. Ebbett. Well, my uncle found, he was a scout, a wagon train scout, and he found that pass and found it was much faster than the way they were going before. And his name was Ebbert and so it became Ebbett's pass. But his name was really Ebbert. But that's all right, it's Ebbett's Pass.

MM: So what year do you think that was, that they were using that pass.

RC: Well, in the '50's, 1850, they used it when my family came over, so maybe in the late 40's too. I don't know how long. He was a scout before he brought the train across that my family was on.

MM: That's your grandfather's brother?

RC: Yeah, he was an uncle, my Dad's uncle.

JG: What was his name again please?

RC: I know it, it's one of those things

MM: It wasn't August Ebbert?

RC: No, my father's name was August Ebbert.

MM: Hmmm, did I write it down, Andy?

RC: No, that's his brother. This was an uncle of theirs.

JG: But his name was Ebberts.

RC: Ebbert. E-B-B-E-R-T.

JG: Okay.

MM: But it got corrupted to Ebbetts.

RC: Yeah, there was some of them, some of the family has got just one *B*, and some has two *B*'s. That one I think was part of the two *B*'s, and Ebbett's, Ebbett's pass. Lots of people called my dad Mr. Ebbett, for years. Lot of nationalities can't pronounce the letters just right.

MM: That comes down into Arnold, and Murphy's that way, highway 4, eventually Copperopolis.

JG: That's correct, it goes over through the Bear Valley area, down to Arnold.

RC: Though at that time I don't think there were any of those towns then.

JG: No there were no towns then, but that was the pass alignment.

MM: So, why was that pass useful, what were the two points that it was joining.

RC: Just to get to California. And they came from Missouri, so I don't know. I think Tioga Pass got too high and so this pass and then could come around and it wasn't as high and they could make it through.

MM: It's still pretty high.

RC: Yeah, it's still pretty high, but not as high as Tioga.

MM: Yeah, and not as steep.

RC: Uh, yeah, but there was, I can remember my Dad saying his Dad said when they came through in a couple places they had to take the wagons apart and lower them down over cliffs and raise them up on another side and then bring all the stuff that was in them down and up and they had to do that all by hand and pulleys. I don't know what they did with the horses. They must have took them down lower or up higher, or something and crossed with them. I don't think you could put...well, you could put horses on a sling, I guess if you had to. I don't know, they never, he never said anything about the horses. But he always told, how they said they had to take the wagons all apart.

JG: Speaking of horses, Ruth, you've told me a story about horses and stealing horses, you want to put that on this tape?

RC: Oh, I don't know...

JG: Sure, come on.

RC: Well, I can't remember which one now, we were ornery kids...

JG: No, you were telling me the story about the horse thief.

RC: Oh, my uncle, yes, he was hung, this was the wagon train scout and they hung him for a horse thief. Because he was going, he was taking people through and he'd scout ahead to see if everything was clear and his horse broke a leg and he shot it and he bought a horse off of some man along the trail to continue and uh, somebody recognized the horse and said that belonged to so and so and he said, "I bought it from him." He said, "Well, have you got a bill of sale?" And no, he didn't, he said he just paid cash for it and they hung him right there.

MM: Oh, my goodness.

RC: And that was the last of the wagon train scout. And then after that, when they found out that he had actually bought the...the guy came by and there his horse was, for some reason, and he said, "How come my horse is here? I sold it the wagon train scout."

JG: Woops.

RC: Yeah, and so then they named the pass after him. They had to do something in his memory to make up for the...

JG: False hanging...

MM: It would be interesting to know what his first name is, if you think it as we go along...

RC: I can't think of it now, but I probably will, probably at two o'clock in the morning.

JG: You'll get a call.

MM: Go right ahead.

JG: One other thing that comes to me and this is just because Ruth and I have been friends and talked about different things for a long time, Ruth, I borrowed a book from you one time called the...about the Pinch 'em Tight Store over in Rescue. What do you know about the Pinch 'em Tight Store.

RC: Oh my grandfather and grandmother ran that for a while. And they uh, people didn't have much money, but they had gold. And so they'd take a dry pea and they'd push it in their thumb and press it tight and it would leave an indentation. Then they'd take that much gold dust and it'd be...this would be two pinches of gold dust, or five pinches, and that's the way they measured there...they'd say pinch it tight and then pick up what gold dust would stay in that little indentation. You had that many pinches to pay for whatever, so they called in the Pinch 'em Tight Store and it uh...

JG: Where was it located, Ruth?

RC: It's on Deer, was, off of Deer Valley Road. There's a Pinch 'em Tight Creek along there now. Along where the store was. I'm not just sure of the exact location. They tell me that uh, that there's an old oven out there on the hillside, where somebody used to bake things in this old oven, but I don't know where it is, I've never seen it.

JG: This is a few miles north of the Rescue Store on Deer Valley Road.

RC: Yeah, yeah, that is. Yeah, Pinch 'em Tight Store.

JG: Up near where you turn to go to the Jayhawk Cemetery?

RC: Yeah, then they, it burned down. And they moved the store over someplace near where Wing's are and they called it... It was started up then in a rock facing

store, or something, so then they changed the name to the Rock Store, or the Stone Store, or something like that, I can't remember, it's either Rock or Stone. That would identify the building.

MM: You live near the Jayhawk Cemetery now.

RC: Not very far from it

MM: And I guess you have a lot of connection to that place.

RC: I have quite a few of my relatives buried in there. My husband, we had him buried there, too. But my grandparents are buried there, my father is buried there, and uh. my aunts and uncles, there's quite a few of the family buried in there.

MM: Did we get all of the family names, I've got Ebberts and Freidman and uh,

RC: Meder.

MM: Meder.

RC: Meder, M-E-D-E-R.

MM: And who was Meder?

RC: She was a Freidman that married Mr. John Meder. There is a John Meder still alive, it's a grandson, I believe, of the original.

JG: There's even a Meder Road, over there...

RC: Yeah, there's a Meder Road They settled on the Meder Road.

JG: Meder Road is currently located in uh, in uh, Cameron Park, between Cameron Park Drive and North Shingle.

RC: Yeah, it was called Rescue at that time and it was, but after they switched the mailing around different, why now it's Cameron Park. Or Shingle Springs even, I'm not sure what they call it in there now, but...yeah

JG: Meder Road, M-E-D-E-R.

MM: Did you go to high school in this area, too.

RC: I went to Placerville High. El Dorado High. Now there is...we had I think they brought them up from all over the county and I think there was about 300 or some students, and now, what is it three, four high schools. And each one of them has close to a thousand students in them.

JG: Well, we're a no-growth county.

RC: Yeah, yeah we are. Well it sure has grown since then. I guess in the early days it had a large population and then it dwindled down and then it, now, its come back up again. They say there was cabins and homes everywhere in this country at one time. During the mining era.

MM: Well, do you think we're getting close to a good time to stop?

JG: It's up to Ruth, I'm thinking about...Ruth, one question occurs to me, are there other people that you know, that you think should be involved in oral histories for the library.

RC: Well, I think the best one would be uh, Francis Carpenter because he knows... his family was here, his family had the little Rescue store, Carpenter, his grandfather ran that. And I don't know how long they were here. I think they were here, they were here way back when I first came here, when I was a little

girl. And I don't how long they'd been here before that. But Francis Carpenter also gathers history, so he would know a lot of about the era and the country.

JG: There's one other name that we hear a lot about in the Rescue area, and that's the Wing family. Is there somebody that's kind of the elder statesman of the Wing family?

RC: The Wings, Ila Brazil was a Wing, and she was quite a historian, too. Now she isn't very well, but a person could probably talk to her in her home. Somebody said she isn't a bit well. Now she must be about 78 now, so and she isn't getting around very well either. Ila Brazil. And then, I was trying to think of some of the there was of the old families. There was Clark's, but I don't know if there's any of those left around or not. I can't remember any. But the Wings I do know, and uh, the Carpenters. And if there is anyone else in the area, Carpenter would know it. They call him Carp. He would really know about it. And he lives on North Shingle Road. You go down North Shingle Road and you'll see Carpenter Road or something along there and he lives back up in there. Or you could, Francis Carpenter, you could call him in the telephone book.

JG: Well, I think that's a very good start, our first point, and if you think of anything, please let us know that there's something that you'd like to include. This is one of a kind.

MM: Thanks very much, Ruth, I'm going to turn the machine off now, and we can talk off the cuff.

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